

BULLETIN OF THE
ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM
OBERLIN, OHIO



Pl. 1

Rembrandt Walking with Saskia

EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS BY
THE SWEDISH PAINTER
ERNST JOSEPHSON
From The Collection of
DR. STEN LINDEBERG, of STOCKHOLM

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PUBLICATIONS

The Museum Bulletin and catalogues for spe-
cial exhibitions are published at irregular inter-
vals and are sent free to all members of the
Oberlin Friends of Art. They may be purchased
separately.

Photographs and post cards of museum objects
are on sale at the Museum. Orders by mail are
invited.

MUSEUM HOURS

Weekdays, 1:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Evenings, 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Except
Saturday and Sunday.

Sundays, 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Open free at all times.

Foreword

Oberlin is one of the first, if not the first, college in this country to offer a course in Scandinavian Art. That it is able to do this is due in no inconsiderable measure to the co-operation of the Carnegie Corporation and the American-Scandinavian Foundation whose grants in 1935 and 1946-7, together with a Gilchrist-Potter scholarship from Oberlin in 1938, have enabled Miss Ellen Johnson to travel and study extensively in the Scandinavian countries, especially in Sweden. These opportunities for study, plus her Swedish ancestry and her undergraduate and graduate work in the Fine Arts, have been an admirable preparation for writing and teaching in the Scandinavian field. The contacts which she has made abroad have also aroused much interest in Oberlin and its new course, among museum directors, university professors, and art collectors in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. One evidence of this interest is the generosity with which they have presented to the Oberlin art library a large number of outstanding publications in the field of the arts.

The present exhibition of the drawings of Ernst Josephson, loaned by Dr. Sten Lindeberg of Stockholm from his large and impressive private collection, is a further evidence of this interest and generosity. It is impossible to express too warmly the thanks of the college and of the Allen Art Museum for this loan. It is a particularly signal honor to be able to show the work of this most important Swedish artist for the first time in America where he is, strangely enough, so little known. We are much indebted also to Dr. Erik Wettergren, Director of the National Museum in Stockholm, for the interest which he has shown toward Oberlin and its new venture in the Scandinavian field; to Mrs. Kati Nordgren; and to other individuals in museums and elsewhere who have assisted in arranging this exhibition. Finally, I should like to add my deep appreciation and thanks to Dr. Erik Blomberg and Dr. Gotthard Johansson

for the manuscripts which they have prepared on the artist and his work. It is with much regret that we find ourselves unable to print these in this catalogue. We have, however, had them copied in mimeograph form and shall gladly forward such copies upon request from any reader of this bulletin.

In order to enhance the interest in the exhibition of which this is the catalogue, a showing of an important group of drawings by twentieth century artists is being combined with it. These have been most generously loaned by the Buchholz Gallery. To these, the museum is fortunate enough to be able to add two brilliant drawings by Ingres, which have been graciously loaned by the Knoedler galleries, and a number of important etchings and engravings from its own collections, including examples of the work of Rembrandt and Blake, whose relation to Josephson is discussed in this catalogue. This combination of exhibits should make it possible for the visitor to make valuable analogies, comparisons, and contrasts between Josephson's drawings and those of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors.

CLARENCE WARD, Director

To Mr. Ward's expression of gratitude, I should like to add my personal thanks to the American-Scandinavian Foundation and to the many museum officials and other individuals in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark who gave me so much of their time and assistance during my travel and study. I wish especially to thank Dr. Lindeberg for his friendly assistance and his extreme generosity in making this exhibition possible.

ELLEN JOHNSON

Ernst Josephson's Drawings

Ernst Abraham Josephson has been a tremendous influence on modern Swedish art and is considered by most critics to be the greatest painter that that country has produced. He was born of a Jewish family in Stockholm, in 1851, and died in 1906. If he had been born a Frenchman, there is little doubt that he would be studied among the important figures of 19th century art. As it is, his work is only slightly known on the continent,¹ and is just now being "discovered" by Englishmen and Americans.

While a student at the Art Academy in Stockholm from 1867 to 1876, he made brief study trips to Norway, Germany, and France. At this time his work was romantic-historic, depicting figures from Swedish history in dark castle interiors² lit with Rembrandt's light. But even in these early works Josephson's own force is discernible in the boldness of handling and richness of paint surface. This was later to develop into a mastery of paint application, a pure joy in the material itself, which places him among the "painters' painters". These qualities, together with his expressive chiaroscuro, continued to grow with his study and copying of Rembrandt.

The next few years were spent in travelling, in Holland, Italy, and France, during which time he studied and copied the great works in the museums. In 1879 he more or less settled in Paris. Reflections of Courbet, Renoir, and Manet are seen in his work. His naturalist-impressionist portraits of this time

¹There have appeared articles in German publications of which the following are noteworthy:

Struck, Herman, *Ernst Josephson*, Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst, 1909, vol. 20, pp. 243-247, 6 reprs.

Wohlin, Karl, *Ernst Josephson*, Kunst und Künstler, 1909, vol. 7, pp. 479-491, 7 reprs.

Hartlaub, G. F., *Der Zeichner Josephson*, Genius, 1920, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 21-33, 8 reprs.

²See *Slottsgemak* repr. in Erik Blomberg, *Ernst Josephson*, Göteborg, 1945, pl. 1.

reveal a new note in their broad, flat handling of color areas and in their decorative emphasis, as well as an individual interpretation in their personal insight and expressiveness.³ Josephson was not content to take his Spanish influence in a diluted form from Manet, so in 1881 he went to Spain, where he was as deeply impressed by the colorful life as by the canvases of Velasquez. The latter's work obviously influenced Josephson in the broad handling, the brief, sure drawing in paint, and in the luminous subtlety of color. But his greatest master was, and remained, Rembrandt, to whom he never failed to acknowledge his indebtedness. In a letter to a friend, Axel Borg, he once wrote the following: "A man can admire many beautiful women, but he can love only one; so I admire and am charmed by many artists, but I can love only one, and one only,—Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn."⁴ Analogies with his master are apparent in both technical and spiritual qualities, in richness of color and mystic quality of light, and in sensitivity, expressiveness, and depth of perception. As a young man Josephson had boldly vowed that he would become "Sweden's Rembrandt or die".⁵

His contemporaries, however, were far from regarding him in any such light. He had been the leader of the Opponents⁶ against academic art in Sweden, but he "shocked" even his fellow painters, and they would not go all the way with him in his bold ideas. In 1887, he left Paris to go to the island of Brehåt off the coast of Britanny. Without even the financial means to buy paints, and denied further help from his patron, Pontus Fürstenberg, embittered by the criticism his work re-

³See the portrait of Journalist G. Renholm repr. in Per-Olof Zennström, *Ernst Josephson*, Stockholm, 1946, fig. 21. This portrait was exhibited in Paris in 1881; the report on the Salon of that year in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* refers to Josephson as "one of the greatest contemporary portrait painters." (It is interesting to note that thereafter, Josephson, with his more daring pictures, won the further distinction of being rejected by the official Salon.)

⁴Zennström, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁵*ibid.*, p. 35.

⁶For an exhaustive study of the opponents see Sixten Strömbom, *Konstnärsförbundets historia*, Stockholm, 1945.

ceived, and tortured by the lack of understanding of his friends, he finally succumbed to the mental illness—partially inherited—which had been threatening him for some time. He was only 37 years old when, in 1888, he was taken to a mental hospital in Uppsala, where he stayed for only a short time; as he became somewhat improved, he returned to Stockholm, remaining there until his death in 1906. During his illness, he made hundreds of drawings and many oils and watercolor sketches:⁷ fantastic, mystic, and profoundly expressive. As he forsook reality, retiring into his *cwn*, the schizophrenic's world of imagination, in which he "communed" with the great artists and other great figures of the past—especially those from history, the Bible, and Shakespeare—his fantasy and power of artistic expression were freed completely; and he created some of the finest treasures of Swedish art.

The 100 drawings which Oberlin is privileged to show, from the distinguished collection of Dr. Sten Lindeberg of Stockholm, date from this later period of Josephson's life. He had become interested in spiritualism which was much in vogue in Paris in the '80s, and this accounts in part for some of the drawings being signed with such names as "Rembrandt", "Velasquez", "Michelangelo", or "Raphael", sometimes "through Ernst Josephson". Likewise in poetry, Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton "dictated" to him. Though some of the drawings from the time of his illness may be more interesting from a psychiatric point of view, as the expression of a sick-mind, than they are as works of art, we are here concerned with the aesthetic significance which the majority of them possess.

To the ever-growing list of spiritual "fathers" of contemporary art, in which group the importance of another Scandinavian, Edvard Munch, is increasingly acknowledged, we suggest adding another name, that of Ernst Josephson. His direct influence upon Swedish painting of this century is paramount; his relation with other artists on the Continent may be more in

⁷An impressive exhibition of Josephson's work of this late period was held in Stockholm, Nov.-Dec. 1946, at the Nutida Konst Gallery. The interest of the Swedes in art is outstanding and their attendance at the hundreds of exhibitions held every season enviable.

the nature of coincidence of spirit and execution, a sort of preview of expressive, modified abstraction. However, we do know that Picasso saw a large portfolio reproducing 40 Josephson drawings, published in 1918.⁸ This fact is reported by Ragnar Hoppe, one of the editors of the publication, and an acquaintance of Picasso.⁹ The eager Spaniard professed a great interest in Josephson's work, of which he also saw originals in the possession of Swedish painters and collectors in Paris. Though we hesitate to suggest a definite influence, Picasso himself might be the last to deny it; he has taken his sources wherever he found them, secure in the strength of his own identity. In his own words, the only person he has ever been afraid of copying is himself. Be that as it may, the work of Josephson precedes the Neo-classic, early 1920's, drawing of Picasso, to which it bears particular resemblance in its simplification, abstraction, insistence upon contour, rhythmic flowing line, and distortion providing greater expression of both form and content. Picasso's *Women by the Sea*,¹⁰ 1921, may be compared with Josephson's *Woman with Long Hair* (Cat. No. 25) in the above mentioned qualities. The Picasso is if anything more derivative, —his most obvious sources at this time were antiquity, Raphael, and Ingres, —more nostalgic and graceful, less distorted, less disturbing, than some of the drawings of Josephson during the time of his illness.

A comparison with Matisse also suggests itself. The near-abstraction, distortion, absolute simplification of both figures

⁸Paulsson, Gregor and Ragnar Hoppe, *Ernst Josephsons teckningar*, 1888-1906, Stockholm, 1918. (Erik Blomberg comments on the fact of Oskar Kokoschka's owning this publication as not being surprising, in an article: *Ernst Josephsons sjukdomskonst*, Konstrevy, 1947, vol. 23, no. 1, p. 23.) Several of the drawings exhibited in Oberlin were included in the original portfolio, among them *Ruth*, *The Sun-god*, and *Rembrandt walking with Saskia*. Recently has appeared an impressive Danish portfolio of Josephson's drawings which includes 16 full-page reproductions of those in Dr. Lindeberg's collection, Dan Sterup-Hansen, ed., *Ernst Josephson Tegninger*, Copenhagen, 1946.

⁹I am indebted to Folke Holmér of the National Museum, Stockholm, for this information.

¹⁰Repr. in Barr, Alfred H., Jr., Picasso, *Fifty years of his art*, New York, 1940, p. 120.

and background, the flat decorative quality, and the dry line of some of the Josephsons definitely bring Matisse to mind. Here, again, one feels that the Josephson distortions are less for plastic than for emotional expressiveness; he was more naturally than self-consciously "naïve".

While he anticipates several contemporary artists in his distortion and expressive line, Josephson was perhaps closer, in spirit, to a predecessor of his, William Blake; though it is doubtful that the Englishman's work was known to him. Like Blake, Josephson was childlike and intense in his profound, mystic expression; like Blake, Josephson was a poet of no little significance. The analogy in their poetry is as interesting and apparent as the analogy in their drawing, but we must confine ourselves to a consideration of the latter in this brief introduction.¹¹ One is impressed by a similarity in power and majesty, at times reaching monumentality, in the drawings of both. Compare the mystic intensity of Josephson's *Prophet* (Cat. No. 10) with Blake's *Then the Lord Answered Job out of the Whirlwind*.¹² A further comparison may be made with Josephson's *The Sun-god* (pl. 2) and Blake's *Glad Day*¹³ in the symbolic identification and acceptance of glory, the romantic-spiritual sentiment, as well as in the decorative, distorted, flowing line. This drawing is, incidentally, probably Josephson's last self-portrait.

In his later work he goes back to romanticism, history, sagas, and literature. We meet such figures as The Viking, and others from the writings of Geijer, Fritjof and Ingeborg, Gustaf Vasa, Romeo and Juliet, and the nature-saga figures

¹¹A collection of Ernst Josephson's poetry has recently been re-edited and selected by Erik Blomberg, *Svarta Rosor och Gula*, Stockholm, 1945. The title is taken from one of the poems, *Svarta rosor*, in which appears as a refrain the oft-quoted line: "Because sorrow has night-black roses." Like Blake's, Josephson's lyrics have often been set to music. This particular one, *Black roses*, has been made into song by Sibelius.

¹²On exhibition from our own collection. For an even greater similarity to Blake, see the magnificent drawing, *The Creation of Adam* by Josephson in the National Museum, Stockholm, repr. in Zennström, *op. cit.*, fig. 59.

¹³Repr. in *William Blake*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1939, p. 156.

like the Water-sprite,¹⁴ a kind of Nordic Orpheus, which Josephson had often depicted throughout his life as a symbol of the conflict between despair and exaltation, between realist and dreamer, naturalist and romantic, animal and human, pagan and Christian—themselves all a part of the conflict which precipitated Josephson's illness. The Northerner's mystic melancholy and restraint, set against the warmth and passion of his Jewish heritage, created a further conflict in his personality. It was, however, not only the mysterious, dark forces of nature that appealed to him; he had also the Scandinavian's love for nature in her lighter aspects; observe the flowers appearing as little decorative additions in several of the drawings.

Such wash-drawings as *Pondering Over Life* (Cat. No. 94) and *Woman and Child* (Cat. No. 9) are obviously the result of his long admiration for Rembrandt in their strong light-dark, brevity, and powerful simplification. They are in quite a different style from the lyric, highly refined contour drawings such as *The Pilgrim* (pl. 3). At times the line is so continuous and free that it appears as though the artist had not lifted his pen, or pencil, from the paper in the "automatic" technique. The rhythmic flowing, melodic line is often *jugendstil* in quality. *The Viking* (pl. 5) particularly evidences this characteristic which is admirably suited for what it is—illustration.

Yet another style, contrasting with the heavy wash and the clean line drawings, is the more mannered pointillist method of composing by little dots, appearing in such papers as *Ruth* (Cat. No. 96) and as *Rembrandt Walking with Saskia* (pl. 1).

¹⁴Among the several oil versions of *Näcken* (*The Water-sprite*) are to be noted those in the National Museum, Stockholm, the Göteborg Art Museum, the collection of Prins Eugen, and several sketches, one belonging to Dr. Lindeberg and one to the National Museum, presented by the son of Theo van Gogh, to whom Josephson had given it and which was mentioned in a letter by Vincent to Theo. Refer to Carl Nordenfalk: *Van Gogh and Sweden*, in Konsthistorisk Tidskrift, 1946, vol. 15, no. 3-4, p. 90.

As a young man, Josephson expressed his faith and ambition in a letter¹⁵ to his mother with these words: "Nothing bears stronger witness to God's greatness and existence than that he created a creature, who himself can create. My ambition reaches beyond the grave. It consists in this—that I shall have been able to create a work before which, after I have gone to sleep for eternity, an artist would stand still and say: 'He was an artist!'" A survey of the drawings in this exhibition shows how well Ernst Josephson achieved his aim.

ELLEN JOHNSON

¹⁵Bloemberg, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

Catalogue

NOTE: An asterisk before a number indicates that the drawing is illustrated.

1. THE IRATE FATHER
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
2. FIGHT WITH AXES
Ink, 362 x 225 mm.
3. SIX HEADS
Ink, 362 x 225 mm.
4. GOTHIC PRINCE
Ink, 349 x 211 mm.
5. HEAD, SIGNED "FRANS HALS"
Ink, 311 x 200 mm.
6. HEAD
Ink, 328 x 200 mm.
7. NUDE MALE FIGURE
Ink, 350 x 212 mm.
8. THREE-QUARTER-LENGTH PORTRAIT OF A MAN
Ink, 328 x 199 mm.
9. WOMAN AND CHILD
Ink, 385 x 235 mm.
10. PROPHET
Ink, 365 x 227 mm.
11. WOMAN WITH A LOCK OF HAIR
Pencil, 324 x 199 mm.
12. PIPE-SMOKER
Pencil, 328 x 197 mm.
13. AFTER THE PLAY
Ink, 385 x 238 mm.
14. AT THE SHORE
Ink, 385 x 232 mm.
15. DANCING FIGURE
Ink, 370 x 226 mm.
16. MAN PRAYING
Ink, 390 x 237 mm.
17. THE POISONED DRAUGHT
Ink, 383 x 232 mm.
18. SUICIDE
Ink, 350 x 212 mm.
19. MAN IN A RAPIDS
Ink, 350 x 212 mm.
20. MAN AND WOMAN II
Pencil, 360 x 222 mm.
21. IN THE HAMMOCK
Ink, 387 x 235 mm.

22. WOMAN WITH A PEN
Pencil, 328 x 197 mm.
23. THE ILLUSIONIST
Ink, 371 x 225 mm.
24. THE STATUE
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
25. WOMAN WITH LONG HAIR
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
26. FALLING HORSEMAN
Ink, 348 x 211 mm.
27. THE LESSON
Ink, 360 x 226 mm.
28. TRITON
Ink, 385 x 235 mm.
29. THE SCHOOLMASTER
Ink, 362 x 226 mm.
30. THE SMILE I
Ink, 311 x 238 mm.
31. THE SMILE II
Ink, 312 x 238 mm.
32. THE SINGER
Ink, 360 x 230 mm.
33. CHRIST
Ink, 361 x 223 mm.
34. A SERVANT-GIRL
Ink, 362 x 226 mm.
35. MAN AND WOMAN I
Ink, 358 x 224 mm.
36. ROMANTIC PORTRAIT OF A GIRL
Pencil, 361 x 221 mm.
- * 37. THE PILGRIM
Ink, 365 x 227 mm.
38. OTHELLO AND DESDEMONA
Ink, 364 x 226 mm.
39. PAPAGENO
Ink, 365 x 225 mm.
40. THE CREATION
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
41. THE PAINTER
Pencil, 350 x 212 mm.
42. WOMAN WAVING
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
43. DON QUIXOTE
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
44. WOMAN WITH PEACOCK FEATHERS
Ink, 356 x 208 mm.
45. WOMAN IN A SHAWL
Ink, 365 x 227 mm.
46. MEPHISTOPHELES
Ink, 358 x 222 mm.

47. THE DRUMMER
Ink, 387 x 236 mm.
48. MY CASTLE IN THE AIR
Ink, 350 x 212 mm.
49. THE WOMAN AND THE SUN
Ink, 348 x 212 mm.
50. THE NIGHT RISES OUT OF THE SEA
Ink, 385 x 236 mm.
51. SOLDIERS WITH A BANNER
Ink, 362 x 226 mm.
52. PLAISIR D'AMOUR
Ink, 357 x 212 mm.
53. WOUNDED SOLDIERS OF CHARLES XII
Ink, 362 x 226 mm.
54. SVEN DUFVA—FROM ENSIGN STOAL'S LEGENDS
Ink, 361 x 226 mm.
55. INCIDENT FROM ENSIGN STOAL'S LEGENDS
Ink, 362 x 225 mm.
56. A WARRIOR
Ink, 325 x 245 mm.
57. THE WILD BEAST
Ink, 356 x 224 mm.
58. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS IN PRISON
Ink, 327 x 200 mm.
59. THE CIRCUMSTANCES
Ink, 136 x 95 mm.
60. HEROD
Ink, 277 x 110 mm.
61. A FANTASY IN INK
Ink, 189 x 241 mm.
62. MOZART, SIGNED "MICHAELANGELO BONATTI"
Ink, 315 x 199 mm.
63. THE EVENING SONG OF THE SHEPHERDESS
Ink, 178 x 48 mm.
- * 64. THE VIKING
Ink, 370 x 225 mm.
65. THE FOREST BRIDE I
Ink, 385 x 233 mm.
66. THE FOREST BRIDE II
Ink, 385 x 233 mm.
67. HONOUR AND REMEMBRANCE . . .
Ink, 387 x 237 mm.
68. FROM OUR FOREFATHERS HATH IT COME . . .
Ink, 390 x 235 mm.
69. MIGNONETTE
Ink, 385 x 233 mm.
70. COVER DESIGN FOR A CYCLE OF SONGS
Ink, 383 x 235

71. THE FRENCHMAN
Ink, 362 x 226 mm.
72. THE POET AND THE SPRING
Ink, 370 x 225 mm.
73. SPANISH WOMAN
Ink, 385 x 236 mm.
74. THE PRINCESS SMILES
Ink, 320 x 235 mm.
75. THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
76. NYMPH WITH FEATHER
Ink, 350 x 212 mm.
77. THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE
Ink, 365 x 227 mm.
78. WOMAN WITH A BAG OF FRUIT
Ink, 328 x 201 mm.
79. KULNEFF'S TOAST—FROM ENSIGN STOAL'S LEGENDS
Ink, 361 x 225 mm.
80. HERMES
Ink, 385 x 233 mm.
81. VIKING
Ink, 365 x 226 mm.
82. THE FIFTH OF JUNE
Ink, 349 x 213 mm.
83. THE PARTING
Ink, 385 x 240 mm.
84. THE DEDICATION
Ink, 371 x 225 mm.
85. THE QUEEN
Ink, 349 x 211 mm.
- * 86. LOVERS BY THE SEA
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
87. RESCUE IN THE TEMPEST
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
88. NAPOLEON III
Ink, 365 x 227 mm.
89. WOMAN WITH EARRINGS
Ink, 349 x 213 mm.
90. DON JUAN AND LEPORELO
Ink, 390 x 232 mm.
91. WOMAN WITH SWORD AND PALM
Ink, 326 x 199 mm.
92. MARTIN LUTHER
Ink, 350 x 211 mm.
- * 93. THE HOMECOMING
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.
94. PONDERING OVER LIFE
Ink, 385 x 234 mm.
95. WOMAN WITH PARASOL
Ink, 349 x 212 mm.

96. RUTH
Ink, 360 x 225 mm.
97. WOMAN WITH A RIFLE
Ink, 384 x 234 mm.
- * 98. THE SUN-GOD
Ink, 305 x 201 mm.
- * 99. REMBRANDT WALKING WITH SASKIA
Ink, 330 x 200 mm.
- *100. THE WATER-sprite
Ink, 385 x 238 mm.



Pl. 2

The Sun-god



Pl. 3

The Pilgrim



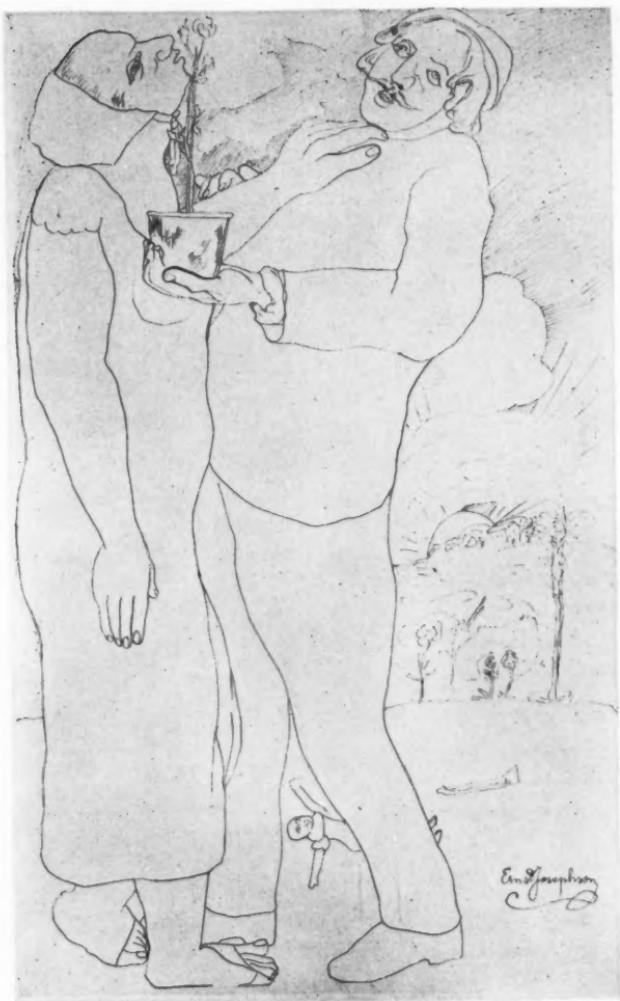
Pl. 4

The Water-sprite



Pl. 5

The Viking



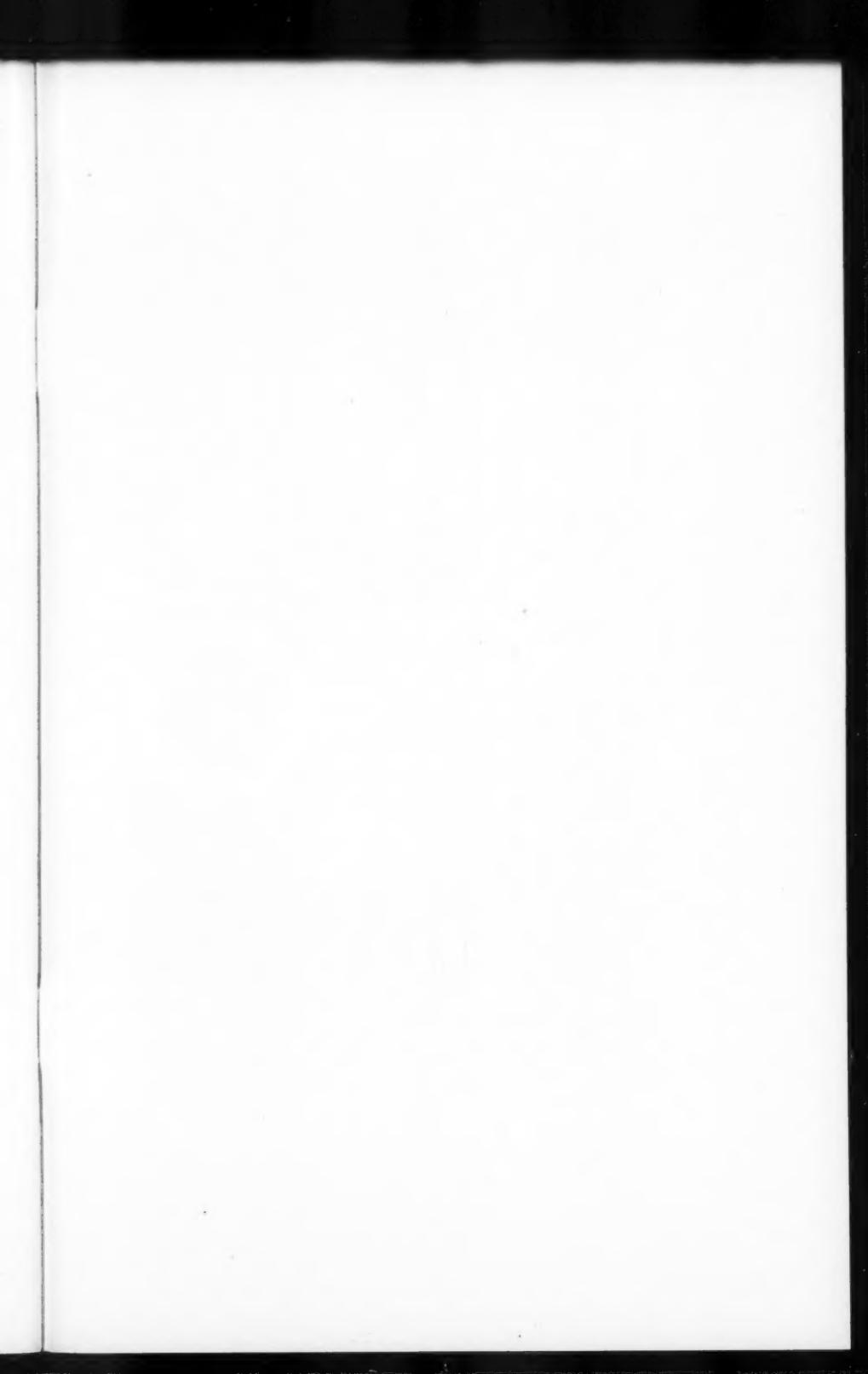
Pl. 6

The Homecoming



Pl. 7

Lovers by the Sea



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The adequate maintenance of the museum and the development of its collections are dependent upon the assistance of its friends. We invite anyone interested in the Oberlin College Art Museum to contribute to its growth by becoming a Friend of Art under one of the following groups.

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